

Faced with Triple Crisis in Japan

Japan has suffered a really terrible catastrophe, with a huge earthquake striking the eastern part of Japan at 2:46 pm on March 11, 2011 followed by a towering tsunami, combined with the serious trouble at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station complex, which is located approx. 50km from my hospital. The disaster was officially named the 2011 Great Eastern Japan Earthquake; the total number of victims is estimated at more than thirty thousand people, with several cities and towns nearly completely destroyed.

I was with my wife in my house adjacent to my hospital when the disaster struck. I cancelled a planned visit to Peru at the official invitation of the Policlínico Peruano Japonés sent through the Ambassador of Japan to Peru and Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, to attend events commemorating the 30-year friendship between Japan and Peru through medical activities. I then worked to put into action the preparations we had made for such a disaster, since the newest version of the report from the JMA Committee on Emergency and Disaster Medicine was published a year ago, on March 11, 2010! I will find an opportunity in the near future to report in detail on our relief activities in this catastrophe.

Allow me to take this opportunity to express my deepest condolences to all the victims and express my heartfelt gratitude for all the outpourings of good will and tremendous support which the disaster areas have been receiving.

I am also very thankful for all the messages and words of encouragement I received immediately after the disaster from all over the world as the international delegate of the Japan Medical Association.

Yours cordially,

Masami Ishii